Watching You

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Watching You

by EarthsickWithoutYou

Summary

Hannibal, who is a surgeon and the Chesapeake Ripper, sees college student Will at a bookstore by chance and falls madly in love. He decides to stalk the boy and learn everything about him before approaching. This includes, of course, wild obsession, voyeurism, and killing anyone in his way. AU based on the Netflix show *You.*

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

"Chance turns a kaleidoscope in her hands.
Billions of colored glass particles flash." -Wislawa Szymborska, "The Seance"

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A small bell rang cheerfully as Hannibal entered the quirky, dark little bookstore. A hole in the wall, he mused, but such places often hid the most amazing original editions, often at a decent price.

He'd been terribly bored lately, even with his many hobbies, his career and social life. The always-in-demand Dr. Lecter had finally realized that busy did not mean interested. And being needed did not satisfy him as much as the mere concept of being wanted.

So, he'd taken up the new pastime of becoming a classic literature aficionado. Finding the secret treasure in these cozy little nooks of countless volumes was exciting; it was a hunt, and he liked the rhythm of it.

The joy of success, the entertainment for lonely hours. To be able to bring a beautiful old book home with him to read that night by the crackling fire made him feel less alone. He would be alone in the room, yes, as usual, but not in all of these magical other worlds, past places in time, among such sparkling casts of characters. After a glass of wine, he'd even sleep reasonably well despite his restless state during the days.

He discovered one whole shelf stacked up with books facing in the wrong direction so their pages were displayed rather than the spines. A sign, hand-written in curly cursive, said "*take a chance, you never know*…"

Ah. Literary carpe diem. A quaint but not unappealing concept. He brushed the firm edges of the pages with his fingers, wondering which he should pull out. And he thought this mild excitement and suspense would be the utmost he experienced on that quiet, rainy Monday.

Then, everything changed. The something Hannibal had craved for years without knowing how to name it was before his eyes, only it was someone.

A curly-haired, bright-eyed boy had come in, setting off the jolly tinkling bell. He had an umbrella, or the remnants of one, and he was sighing at finally getting the old thing to close. Then he set it politely against the front wall beside Hannibal's own, making the doctor's heart skip a beat.

"Mornin, Edwin," said the twenty-something boy, covering a huge yawn with his lovely hand. A soft, ivory hand with long, perfectly shaped fingers.

An elderly fellow, most likely the owner of the store, said with sprightly interest in an English accent, "Morning? Is it? I thought it was still last night."

The boy laughed. "Stop staying up so late repairing those Tolstoy hardcovers. They aren't going to walk away, and you're in no rush to sell them."

“Sell them?” Edwin scoffed. “Never. Why, the mere *idea*…”

The boy grinned, a pure, sunny smile showing off straight white teeth with adorable fangs. He had blue-grey eyes, rosy cheeks, full, tempting lips, and an alertness to life’s adventures that caught Hannibal’s curious eyes instantly. This young man, who happened to be unquestionably the most beautiful creature whom the exceptionally picky man had ever set eyes on, displayed all the better shades and depths of light and dark.

Hannibal’s expression softened even more.

Oh. Hello, you.

“Will?” said Edwin helpfully, making Hannibal smile.

Now he had a name for this stunning creature, and what a perfect one it was. Will called, “Hmm?”

“There’s a box of donations someone dropped off last night; I haven’t looked through it yet. Why don’t you do me a favor and see if there’s anything good.” The old man smiled, knowing he was downplaying how delightful a chance this would be for the young book-lover.

“Really?” Will smiled again, and Hannibal held onto the bookshelf for support, drinking in the sight of him as one would need air after being trapped underground in a coffin all one’s life.

“Thanks, Edwin!” Will went to a table right in front of the window, where a tabby cat was giving herself a shameless bath. When the young man paused to lay hands on a medium-sized box, it was too close for her comfort; the cat stalked off in an annoyed huff.

She belonged in this bookshop, like the boy with his happy smile, thumbing through old hardcovers and paperbacks, showing off a stunning profile. It shamed the most luscious classical art of youths alluring enough to call gods down to earth out of helpless obsession.

All at once and for the first time in his superior, solitary life, Hannibal was helpless. And obsessed. He could not control this craving; he could only pursue it in his own careful way.

Will had an endearingly chipper attitude, despite what was clearly a somewhat downtrodden experience (a beat-up leather book bag hanging from one shoulder of a tweed blazer that had also seen much better days and was a bit too large for him; rips in his jeans and a soldiering-on tiredness in his face).

The snobbish Dr. Lecter had to admit, the low-key, shabby clothing only made the boy’s obvious beauty stand out. Still…

He began walking casually around the store – there was certainly no need to look like an obsessed stalker, after all – further surveying Will without the boy noticing.

Hmm…he smells of books, candles (bourbon, honey, and bitter orange, grounded by tobacco and clove, wax and smoke. A very pleasant scent. A homey, inviting one that made him wish

to bury his face in the boy's chest and inhale his cheap little shirt)

The thoughts he was having were so unusual to him, but oh how he was enjoying himself on a deeper level than ever. He was so delightedly engaged that he smiled, doing his best to peruse books and steal more glances, listening carefully and noticing every tiny move Will made.

Will's voice was youthful, but masculine, with the softness of a gentle soul. Yet there was a hidden edge telling Hannibal he was fathoms deeper than that.

You're kind, soulful, sweet, talented, brilliant. Giving, even to a fault. Look at those eyes. I hope you don't allow others to walk all over you, but I'm afraid that's most likely the case, beautiful boy. Charming, irresistible You. My Will, forevermore.

Hannibal's goals and plans for life had abruptly but deliriously switched tracks. His business was now to secure their happiness by learning everything there was to know about Will, then arranging circumstances to be at their most advantageous when they finally met.

Some young people, college aged like Will, came into the store, bustling about discussing reading assignments and "*better to get a cool old edition at a cheap price*," et cetera.

Will was in his own little world, having found a soft, deep violet copy of *Brideshead Revisited*. He ran his fingers carefully over the gold embossed letters on the front. Not a first edition, but an old one, and in fine condition.

It was easier to see the lines of his figure as he moved, shoulders and back shifting to look through the box, then dreamily out the window (for he was a dreamer above all). When the nymph leaned over to make note of a book a little further from his easy reach, his tatty jacket rode up and Hannibal could see the shape of his ass through the jeans. He felt his blood getting hotter by the moment.

The most beautiful face, the most scrumptious body. Smelling so good, looking so incredibly innocent but wise in his own way. A deep, half-repressed frustration kept him restless, like Hannibal. Will was not content. He was merely trying. He had the body of an angel, and it made Hannibal want to do devilish things to it.

You don't realize that you're gorgeous. You…hope you're passably attractive but try not to dwell on it. Social awkwardness and shyness keep the opposite sex at bay. Have you dabbled with other boys or men, my love? I don't…think so.

You look so incredibly naive, it would delight me to take you now, right there, bent over those books. Telling you how divine you are in every way while I slam into you and make you moan, pants around your ankles, everyone staring at you out in the street and within the store. I'll fuck you harder for them to see. You like it. You're a sensuous thing, and a wicked one in your way; you haven't given into your own desires enough. You're afraid to understand who you are.

But I See You.

A girl with silky black hair and a wryly fun personality went up to Will. She leaned against the book boxes, amused, not especially intending any flirtation. A friend. Thank goodness. She should be grateful not to have attempted anything further.

"Graham."

Will looked up from his books, having slid a pair of glasses onto his nose. Hannibal wanted to fuck Will so hard that the glasses would keep trying to fall off. The older man would keep them on that pretty face for his enjoyment. *How adorable, how incomparably sexy you are.*

"Katz," Will responded, affectionately cynical like the girl.

"So. You're a lit major and you work at the university library. Whenever you aren't staring at a book to study, pick apart and write about it, you're…staring at other books."

"Mmhm, oh look…" He'd found yet more books of interest.

"So as I was saying, allll that literature every day, and when you get time off, you…go to the bookstore?"

"Right." Will adjusted his glasses with a short laugh, acknowledging her point. "To stare at books. C'mon, this place is so…soothing, right? I like the jazz music. It sounds like Christmas even when it isn't. This is such a good place to–"

"Hide?" she quipped. "Avoid going out on dates?"

He sighed. "Maybe." And hugged two books to his chest.

Your eyes are so vivid…so lovely. You're perfect. And I can hardly wait to…

Will's face suddenly fell as three more young people approached. It did not take longer than a few seconds for Hannibal to realize that in their own ways, all three were potentially going to be a problem.

A blonde with a beret and her hair in two pigtails was obviously his current and hopeless "crush." She was the kind of girl who actually looked striking in that sort of attire, stylish and cute, if you liked that sort of thing, which Hannibal most certainly did not. Will tried not to look at her, but did so from under his lashes, shyly. Hannibal decided to kill her as soon as possible and make up the better part of a whole dinner party menu by utilizing every piece of her pathetic form which might be eaten.

A boy, sort of an egotistical brute by the look of him, had the girl's hand in his, and swung it to show off the connection. Hannibal thought this actually made the whole matter worse, because now Will was jealous.

Another girl, this one brunette with a more subtle but elegant dress style, smelling of lavender and annoyingly prominent concern, looked as if she considered Will her latest charity case.

“Oh, hi Alana,” said Will to the concerned brunette, who smiled as if he was a teddy bear missing one arm that she planned to sew back on and then pat him on the head. He dared a more direct look at the blonde. “Hi, Gray.”

Yes, her name would be “Gray,” wouldn’t it? Obnoxious, yet it did describe her useless and vapid nature well enough.

Hannibal would ensure she was more of a ruby red shade, very soon.

His jaw clenched as Gray gave Will the standard “*I want you I don’t want you I want you pay attention to me until I have someone more interesting around I don’t want you I want you” look that wasn’t even acceptable in primary school*.

Oh, Will. Hannibal frowned. *Don’t be a glutton for punishment, you’re smarter than that.*

“Hey, uh, what’s your name again, Graham?” The brute put out a hand and Will shook it reluctantly, looking like he wanted to run or disappear.

Poor baby. Never mind these puerile idiots, come with me and I’ll spoil you.

“So it is,” Will answered archly. “Hey, Brent. Well, good luck shopping.”

Will forced an awkward smile and made a fast exit, coming back for a second only to grab the umbrella he’d left by the door.

Being sociable was not the boy’s speciality. Gray had him dangling like a fish on a hook, Brent was intimidating, Alana’s concern was s(mothering), and Katz would understand the reason for him suddenly fleeing the store - a panic at the discomfort involved with such an encounter. Precious, shy boy.

Hannibal had so much to do. First, he found every book Will had admired but left behind, unable to afford them. He purchased them (gifts, which he would save until the boy was his) and went home to carry out a deeper investigation.

He smiled, driving his Bentley back to the hospital where he worked. He could still see Will’s face, hear his voice. Almost taste his lips. He just needed to be closer next time to get a clearer idea of their pink, delectable flavor. His fixation wouldn’t even let his ego deny the obsessive need to lay claim on Will.

There were victims he’d planned to visit that night, ongoing schemes to continue, but he didn’t care for any of it now. Only Will.

Hannibal had been disappointed by a colorless world for too long, and now that he had a chance to truly live, nothing would hold him back. He wondered, could the boy really be that extraordinary? Was he under the influence of some odd mood that might pass? Would Will turn out to be just another bore? Even as the thought entered his mind, he felt he should trust his instincts. They screamed that Will Graham was anything but boring.

Most people are so endlessly disappointing, Will. But are you?

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Dr. Lecter kept a table reserved at each of the best restaurants in the city. At various meals from brunch to later dinners, he was often admiringly observed eating with fellow elegant socialites or simply alone. He never seemed to need anyone, content to enjoy the chef's latest tasting menus and a good book, occasionally savoring a lovely view of the skyline through the windows by which he was always seated.

He still looked like the same man that evening but he might have appeared slightly more preoccupied than usual. Although the Secondi Piatti di Pesce had been placed before him, consisting of his favorite delicacies, Dr. Lecter only had a few bites.

Instead, the doctor stared at his tablet screen, having darkened the screen to avoid anyone seeing what he was doing. The mission, of course, was to scour the whole of social media for the life story, goals, interests, dreams, disappointments (never failures), hobbies and regular haunts of one Will Graham.

It was a relief to see that while his presence was quite limited, patchy, nearly chaotic, Will had accounts on Facebook and Instagram. Will had an occasional impulse towards socializing that seemed to flicker out immediately after a few interactions. How lonely and touch-starved his angel must be. The thought was intoxicating and made his hands ache to do so many, many things to the boy.

You haven't the right people yet, darling. But you will soon. The right person, that is.

The friends list was mostly college classmates or acquaintances from various towns in Louisiana. This gave him Will's origin story and the source of the boy's sweet, half-obscured Southern accent, which he was sure would emerge splendidly once the boy had been pleasured to writhing, moaning joy in his arms.

From there, Hannibal sank into the photos and posts. Will stuck mainly with three topics, literature (the Romantics, the Victorians, the Modernists), boating and/or fishing, and dogs. There were images of book covers accompanied by favorite quotes, and then there were photos of Will grinning on boats, or frolicking with dogs. Any other images he was tagged in by others had him looking distant, confused or disappointed at college events.

Hannibal toggled to Facebook Dating, letting the waiter box up the food for him to take home. Will had a profile, but it appeared to be very seldom used. Users had the ability to leave comments. Various past matches had left the following feedback: "*Rude, totally ghosted," "Can't keep a chat going," "Waste of time," "I think these are just stock photos and it's a scam, look at him," "Don't come on here to ghost," "Weirdo," "Come back and talk baby,*" and such.

Fools. He gazed at the photo of his boy smiling shyly, bright-eyed, on the deck of a boat, petting a small white dog with an underbite. That was Zoe, who apparently lived with the boy at an off-campus apartment shared with roommates. Will did not get along with the roommates.

Hannibal pieced the narrative together by tracing the vague signs of discontent back through Will's rare posts, and the roommates asking him why he never went out, or reminding him to clean up.

Will left a few sharp, disapproving replies that brought a smile to Hannibal's face. It was all too obvious the boy would love to drag a knife across each of their throats, then have the whole place for himself and his little dog.

"*Maybe I'll clean up your messes on the twelfth of Nevuary, Garrett*," one of Will's responses said. Another, "*Listen, did you talk to the landlord about the heating? It's still freezing and he isn't answering my texts*."

Hannibal frowned. His boy should never be cold, nor mistreated. He was alone because he was unique. Hannibal would take proper care of him.

Will's post from that afternoon said he was concerned about Zoe's health as she needed medicine but he couldn't afford it due to the ridiculously high price.

Now, Hannibal had what he needed to carry out a successful courtship.

However, it would not do to foist a presumptuous encounter, nor to startle and possibly distance Will. He was a sensitive and suspicious boy. Hannibal wanted it to be perfect.

It was rather unlikely that he and Will would meet naturally, since it had not been a good moment to start the courtship at the bookshop earlier with all of those gnat-like interferences from his other acquaintances.

And Hannibal had not known everything he needed to, in order to make sure it was the best, most targeted, exceptionally contrived meeting possible.

How, then, would a surgeon in his late forties cross paths with a twenty-three year old college student under circumstances which would engender trust, lay down roots of codependency, and best of all, make it seem natural rather than inappropriate or strange, when matters later shifted to the romantic? He would consider the question all night long.

At home, Hannibal looked at himself in the bedroom mirror after a hot shower. He was just as handsome as ever, he told himself, trying not to focus too much on the creases and lines on his face from age, as it was consoling to remember they meant he was a seasoned and experienced man of the world. He was sophisticated and distinguished-looking, not…old.

He slipped off his robe and tried to give his physique an objective review. Hannibal had certainly worked hard on making his body perfect, like everything else in his life. The worst thing was a collapse into the mundane. The active lifestyle showed in his fit and powerful body.

This love with Will would be sexual, deeply so, but more than that. A meeting of minds and souls, a merging. The dream of understanding and acceptance from this transcendent boy filled him with nervous hope and happiness he feared losing, if he could not properly carry out the plan.

Previously, he'd liked his own touch and company better than the occasional sexual escapades with others, but now! He knew for certain, Will would exceed his every fantasy, no matter how overblown, how laden with his filthiest ideas. He wanted Will's touch, Will's mouth. He had to feel, lick, bite, mark and take that firm, luscious body for his very own. He wanted it..so much.

And so, he collapsed into bed, amorous touches on his own body soon growing rough and impatient, breath hitching as he quickly pushed himself towards orgasm just to squeeze his aching, wet cock and start over. He extended the pleasure through such edging regularly, but it tasted so different now that he was being emotionally edged, forced to endure waiting before having Will under him, pulled apart just as he might choose, Will's moans rising to screams of unbearable pleasure and delicious pain.

Will…

The photo of you on the boat…your body in those little shorts and that tight t-shirt. You unforgivably perfect minx. You don't know your own power, what you do to me. You have me undone. Your silky, smooth skin, your smile and sweet voice, the pain, darkness, hope and kindness in your eyes, your beautiful eyes, my love. I need you…I can hardly wait…

Hannibal let himself come, finally, with a jolt of harsh pleasure, cum spilling over his fist as he stroked into oversensitivity. He shook all over, desperate. The sheets were soaked with sweat and pre-cum. All he could see or think of was his Will, in a wild frenzy of lust and love, until sleep dragged him under.

You, my angel, oh, Will…I'll see you soon.

***

Hannibal chose a night when Will had gone out, giving him the chance to sneak into the boy's apartment and administer the medicine to help the little dog recover her health. He stood outside watching through the window the following evening and saw the boy playing with Zoe, looking so elated that she was better, if confused how it had occurred.

While in the apartment, after looking through all of the boy's things and stealing a pair of soft boxer briefs for his own personal enjoyment later on, Hannibal had bugged the whole place. Now he could see and hear everything that happened.

He had killed the landlord (making him into a roast with a delicious blackberry-orange sauce) and manipulated circumstances to ensure a fairer owner took over. The heat was functioning properly now.

On the next night, he suffered. Watching through the boy's window, he saw with consternation and near-despair, plus mounting rage how that disgusting girl Gray arrived, whining about her on/off relationship with the grunt from the bookstore whose name Hannibal had already forgotten.

His innocent boy did not even think to close the curtains. Hannibal stood across the street with smoldering jealousy as Will hugged Gray and things escalated as they generally do in

such cases.

Selfishly, the girl allowed Will to kiss and undress her, then bring her to orgasm kneeling on the floor with his sweet, perfect mouth and tongue on her unworthy body. She shuddered, clutched his shoulders, licked her lips and moaned. Then she put her panties back on and hugged him again with a thank you for "*always being there for me.*" And left Will there, still in his pants and with a hard-on, completely un-pleasured.

Hannibal would have killed her either way, but there was something so awful in her treatment of Will, he wanted to do it with the most brutal, sudden blow. Soon enough.

In the meantime, he kept watching as Will wiped tears of disappointment away, then with a sullen look tugged off his pants and underwear before flopping on his bed.

Oh, Will, what are you thinking? The window, exposed, all the lights on? Anyone might see you. Are you an exhibitionist, whether conscious of it or not? Do you just want someone to See you, darling?

In a way, it wasn't all that surprising. Will always dressed and undressed like that, in full view of the street and any passers-by. He had a look as if he assumed no one was looking, but Hannibal thought, underneath, it must give him a small thrill, however unacknowledged. Showing himself off like that…*it's really quite scandalous, you naughty boy.*

Now, Will showed off his petulant masturbation after being abandoned by the despicable (Hannibal hoped *former*) object of his naive affection.

Will lay in bed, eyes closed as he wrapped his pretty hand around a cock that was just as gorgeous as the rest of him; not as large as Hannibal's, but quite well-endowed, perfectly shaped and now rock hard, leaking with the essence of Will, which Hannibal wanted to lap up and make the boy taste on his tongue while feverishly kissing him.

Oh, my boy, what have you done to me?

Restless, agitated and needy, the boy shifted in the sheets, hips rising poetically as he chased pleasure. Will knew his own body and how to come quickly, almost as if it was little more than another biological function like eating or sleeping. He didn't treat himself with the luxurious attention he deserved, but Hannibal would do everything in his own power to make sure he could give that affection, soon, soon–not soon enough.

Will looked so astonishingly lovely, his naked body moving in time with his hand up and down on his throbbing cock; his profile, his arched back, his feet pressing into the sheets as aching cries fled his sumptuous lips.

Hannibal put a hand down his pants, concealed by his coat, and began stroking his painfully hard and alert, thick cock, making the moves match the timing of Will's own. They came in unison, Hannibal smothering a wild and hoarse gasp with his other hand. The sound of Will's louder, whimpering cries of pleasure at climax flooded his ears with ecstasy and longing that tore him apart.

He could not wait much longer to possess this angel.

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The next evening, events conspired to help him with such precision that Hannibal knew for certain, the fates were on his side.

It had been a productive day.

Firstly, he bashed Gray's head in with a brick while she was jogging early in the morning, at a local park. She died instantly. He left her bleeding out under a bridge, where it would be assumed, since there were no witnesses, a vagrant or hooligan had attacked her. He took her wallet to corroborate this.

Of course, he would have vastly preferred to torture and mutilate her, force her to eat her own cooked body parts, then watch as he did the same, mocking her unworthiness for Will. Punishing her evil conduct and cruelty.

He would prefer to make her keep watching as he then systematically destroyed the rest of her, bit by bit, surgically, until it was all over. And then he would eat the remaining organs over the following nights, after a few days' seasoning made their flavor ideal.

But he had to knock this pathetic "queen" from the chessboard permanently, or that loathsome bitch might prevent his courtship with Will from proceeding as free from speed bumps and distractions as it should. Gray had confused the boy enough; she should not be allowed to continue her efforts to keep him as her "fuck buddy" in the "friend zone," not on Hannibal's watch.

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To Hannibal's heart-pounding excitement, he had arranged a momentous encounter with Will that night. It was was to take place at a poetry reading to which the boy had purchased tickets. As a patron of the arts, it was nothing out of the ordinary for Hannibal to attend such an event.

Furthermore, he had made a substantial donation to the literary organization throwing the event, so they asked him to make a few introductory remarks before the reading began.

They were impressed that the remarkable Dr. Lecter, a somewhat legendary figure on the city's arts scene, had even heard of their little society. It was all rather twee and benignly starstruck. Since he and Will had the common ground of poetry to begin with, he hoped this would allow a smooth transition to friendly conversation.

From there, he would simply continue to create "casual" encounters cementing their "friendship" until the next transitional moment occurred, the one allowing the first move to be made towards a sexual relationship, and of course a romantic one.

Hannibal hoped that Will would make that first move, since it would fully confirm the boy's own desire and that he had not suspected the somewhat more complex means by which

Hannibal had obtained his acquaintance and interest.

A smooth introduction, where he would say just the right thing at the exact right time. No room for error. He had to get this right, or he would never forgive himself.

If he could not have Will, then no one could. He didn't want it to come to that, or even consider how unhinged he might become in a situation such as that.

As usual, Hannibal trailed Will on many of his little nightly routines, having arranged his hospital shifts to fit better with Will's own schedule. Will was in class when Hannibal was working, and then they were both free.

He followed the boy from the dorm to the train station. It became obvious he had heard of Gray's death by fatal mugging that morning, since he appeared distraught. Hannibal was not bothered, but quite the reverse. Will's emotional vulnerability would only make it easier for Hannibal to move in and comfort him (thoroughly) for his "loss."

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Will stopped at a bar before he went to the poetry reading. He had four drinks, which was two more than usual.

Hannibal followed Will down to the train platform, awaiting the next one which would take him to the venue for the reading. The ethereal boy was drunk and swaying, muttering under his breath about how nothing good ever happened to him and everything he touched shattered to pieces. This was simply not unusual behavior in the city train stations, and no one but Hannibal paid much notice.

In fact, Hannibal had to pretend he was waiting for a different train in order to escape Will's notice, since this wasn't where he planned for them to "meet."

However, he had no choice but to change this when his poor, wounded bird of a boy began to drunkenly stumble towards the tracks, disoriented and not realizing the danger.

Hannibal froze. What should he do? The unpredictability of his boy, and the possible necessity of changing the careful plan panicked him, until Will toppled over the platform's edge and right onto the tracks.

Then all thought ceased, giving way to feeling. Hannibal rushed over fast as he could, knelt down and saw that Will wasn't badly hurt; it wasn't a far fall. But he was sprawled there, not moving aside from a surprised and pained moan. And the next train was coming; Hannibal heard the bell starting to ring as it got even closer.

He had a sudden flashback of the little bell on the bookshop door that rang when he had walked in that first day, not knowing he was about to meet the love of his life. And memories of everything he'd experienced of Will since that time began to crowd his mind like photographs falling from the ceiling of his memory palace, landing in a mess.

Just as Will was a mess below him. This wasn't what he had planned, but he had to save Will. He truly loved Will. This was more than obsession or selfishness, more than a murderous rampage for the sake of a cold game, as might have been the case in the past. It was all of those things except for cold; he was burning with love for Will, and losing the boy would kill him.

Hannibal put his hand down as far as he could reach. "Here, grab hold of my hand," he urged, "Please, the next train is coming, you're in real danger!"

Will blinked up at him, clearly dizzy. "Huh?"

"Give me your hand, now be a good boy and do as you're told," Hannibal said urgently.

Will smiled at that, in a dazed way, and murmured, "Alright, then." He managed to sit up and use a grip on Hannibal to climb up onto the platform, just in time – the train was entering this part of the tunnel at the moment Will stepped up – and into Hannibal's arms.

***

Hannibal had only thought of saving Will, which was an instinct composed of shocked and agitated emotions, with possible impending trauma. But now that his regular thinking had set back in, he realized this was a chance to potentially make an even better impression on Will, by playing the role of *The Hero.*

"I'm so very sorry that happened," he said solicitously, "Are you quite well, young man?" Hannibal looked the boy over, mentioning, "I'm a Doctor" to excuse the way his hands carefully touched him in certain key places; his wrist pulse, his head, checking for bumps, et cetera. He threw in a few questions to make sure Will didn't have a concussion to round it all out.

He was swooning inside at how wonderful Will felt in his arms, under his hands. So naturally submissive around the older, knowledgeable man who was taller, bigger, stronger, authoritative. Will leaned into this impromptu "check-up" of vitals, his eyes still glazed and baffled.

"Am I quite well? Uhhh…I have no idea," he answered belatedly, laughing in a tragic way. He finally locked eyes with Hannibal, looking momentarily taken aback. "Oh. hi."

Hannibal smiled, leaning down to maintain eye contact while the boy wavered between the big hands resting on his shoulders. The Ripper couldn't help how he gazed, or the affectionate chuckle in his tone. "Hello, you."

End Notes

Part 2 coming soon...

Series playlist: https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5hAdbjZbf7G1Lci0zLf0OF?si=5c78b65a43844dab

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